

Indiana House of Representatives

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AGUILERA TO HELP LEAD REMEMBRANCE FOR EMILIO DE LA GARZA

INDIANAPOLIS – Area residents will have the chance to remember Emilio De La Garza, Jr., an East Chicago native who gave his life in the Vietnam War to save others, in a celebration that will include tributes from State Rep. John Aguilera (D-East Chicago) and Gov. Mitch Daniels.

The governor has decided to recognize De La Garza with a Distinguished Hoosier Award. Aguilera will present the proclamation to his father, Emilio De La Garza, Sr., in a ceremony at 8 p.m. Tuesday (June 21) at the East Chicago American Legion Post, located at 1401 W. Chicago Avenue.

"I believe that Emilio Albert De La Garza, Jr., is a true national hero and deserves to be officially recognized by the state of Indiana," Aguilera said. "For his selfless actions during the Vietnam War, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and recognition from both the military and the federal government.

"This week, Emilio's family is using the anniversary of his birth on June 23 to return to East Chicago to observe his memory, and I will be honored to take part in that celebration," he added.

On April 11, 1970, while serving as a machine gunner on a routine jungle patrol, Emilio and his company confronted a group of Viet Cong guerillas. During the ensuing firefight, he made the heroic decision to dive on a live grenade to save the lives of his fellow Marines.

Emilio was survived by his newlywed wife and a young daughter.

Born in East Chicago in June 1949, he was a 1968 graduate of Washington High School in that city.